

Asks Superintendent to Immediately Stop

(Washington, DC)— Today, U.S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore (D-Milwaukee) wrote to Tony Evers, State Superintendent of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, asking him to immediately stop the process to withhold \$175 million in Federal education funding from Milwaukee Public Schools.

Congresswoman Moore wrote that Superintendent Evers' action is... "especially troubling given that Congress and the Obama Administration are working to change the one-size-fits-all approach of No Child Left Behind that was designed to punish schools, not students" and that "punishing our children is no solution."

She also wrote that, "If our schools are not meeting expectations today – they sure won't be able to meet expectations tomorrow with even fewer resources" and wrote that halting this process to withhold funding is necessary to give the newly-hired superintendent of Milwaukee Public Schools "a chance to succeed."

The full text of Congresswoman Moore's letter follows:

February 5, 2010

Mr. Tony Evers

Superintendent

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Superintendent Evers:

I read with much dismay in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that you are beginning a process to take away Federal funding from Milwaukee's public schools. Your action is especially troubling given that Congress and the Obama Administration are working to change the one-size-fits-all approach of No Child Left Behind that was designed to punish schools, not students. I ask that you immediately stop the process to withhold \$175 million in critical Federal funding from Milwaukee Public Schools.

We simply cannot lift our children up and build a workforce in Milwaukee and in Wisconsin for the 21st Century if we are poorhousing our kids' education.

We both want every MPS student to succeed, and we also want a thriving school system in Milwaukee that guarantees equal opportunity for every child. Our kids deserve nothing less. But punishing our children is no solution. If our schools are not meeting expectations today – they sure won't be able to meet expectations tomorrow with even fewer resources.

Community members have indicated they believe you are withholding this Federal funding as part of an attempt to take away local control of Milwaukee Public Schools in order to qualify for Race to the Top funding. If that is the case, I want to remind you that Education Secretary Arne Duncan has repeatedly told me and our community – he even put it in writing – that mayoral control of public schools is not necessary for Wisconsin to receive Race to the Top funding.

You know that Milwaukee Public Schools just hired a new superintendent who will start in the summer. Your move only takes away local ability to bring about positive changes in our schools. It makes sense to immediately stop this process of withholding \$175 million from Milwaukee Public Schools because we must give our new superintendent a chance to succeed.

It's going to take all of us working together to solve these problems, and I stand ready to work with you.

Sincerely,

Gwen Moore

Member of Congress

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For an interview with Congresswoman Gwen Moore, please contact David Frey at 202-225-4572.